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LETTER DATED 22 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, a letter dated 22 September 1997, addressed to you from Mr. Guido Di Tella, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic, concerning the meeting of ministers for foreign affairs of the States members of the Security Council to be held on Thursday, 25 September 1997, to consider the situation in Africa.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fernando PETRELLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Spanish]

Letter dated 22 September 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you to convey the support of the Argentine Government for the initiative of convening a meeting of ministers for foreign affairs of the members of the Security Council with a view to promoting peace and security in Africa through a firm and coordinated effort by the international community.

This initiative could not be more timely: over 60 per cent of the Security Council's agenda is devoted to situations in Africa. These situations have various causes. Some originate from the explosion of ethnic tensions that had been contained for a long time; others involve problems inherited from the cold war era. Others, finally, are the result of the violent disruption of democratic processes. This climate of instability has led to a decrease in investment and a stagnation of economic and social development. Over and above their differences, all the conflict situations in various parts of the world, and particularly in Africa, have a common denominator: suffering and despair, which in some extreme cases even lead to a denial of humanity.

At the same time, most countries in Africa are endeavouring to strengthen their democratic institutions, promote human rights, carry out fundamental economic reforms and provide a better standard of living for their people. These efforts deserve to be encouraged.

The international community cannot look the other way. Everyone has a moral responsibility to recreate faith in a new future for our African brothers.

The Security Council has taken major steps to maintain peace in the region through the deployment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of an international tribunal to try those responsible for crimes of the utmost gravity which are an affront to the conscience of all, and the implementation of specific sanctions in cases where there is no alternative.

Moreover, the Organization of African Unity has promoted important initiatives through the establishment of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. The conclusion of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty in Africa is also extremely valuable.

This means, therefore, that part of the road has been travelled. Now we must all persevere through a generous effort to achieve political pacification and ethnic harmony so as to make possible the consolidation of democratic processes and sustainable human development in the African continent. In this connection, we believe that the various United Nations bodies, within their

respective areas of competence and in close coordination with regional and subregional organizations, have a role and, I dare say, an obligation to fulfil.

In our view, the international community's response to Africa should have two main dimensions: first, conflict prevention and settlement, properly speaking, and second, laying the groundwork for the elimination of the causes of such conflicts. In both cases, the cooperation of the parties involved is essential.

In the first area, conflict prevention mechanisms, the establishment of peacekeeping operations, efforts to consolidate peace once a conflict has ended and humanitarian assistance are vital elements. Our task, however, does not end there. We should also make a concerted effort to promote economic, technical and social development, both in the countries directly affected by a conflict and in those which suffer its consequences in an indirect but no less tangible fashion.

Consistent with our view of the issue, Argentina has sought to make a contribution in the two areas mentioned above. For this reason, my country has contributed "blue helmets" to various peacekeeping operations and has indicated its willingness to do so in any future operations which the United Nations may deem necessary. We have also sought to contribute to African development through the "white helmets" initiative and various technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and economic assistance programmes.

Today we reaffirm our unswerving commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the protection and promotion of human rights and economic progress in Africa, and we reiterate our wish to participate actively in the efforts of the United Nations to achieve these goals.

(Signed) Guido DI TELLA
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
International Trade and Worship